



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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February 15, 2017

Hon. Lamar Alexander, Chairman
Health, Education, Labor
& Pensions Committee
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Patty Murray, Ranking Senator
Health, Education, Labor
& Pensions Committee
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Senator Murray:

On behalf of the members of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), representing upwards of 90,000 workers in the United States and Canada, I am writing in opposition to the nomination of Andrew Puzder for Secretary of Labor. As you prepare for tomorrow's hearing on Mr. Puzder, we respectfully request that you include IFPTE's letter as a part of the official record.

The mission statement listed on the Department of Labor (DoL) website states the following:

To foster, promote and develop the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

Under normal circumstances and regardless of which political party holds the White House, it is assumed that the person selected to carry out the mission of the DoL is expected to be an advocate for working people of all income levels and in all types of jobs. While Mr. Puzder's position as a fast food executive certainly has allowed him the opportunity to practice the objectives stipulated within the DoL mission, he has unfortunately taken a completely opposite approach. Instead, Mr. Puzder is a man who has spent a career attempting to keep wages as low as possible, including taking every opportunity to oppose any increase in the minimum wage, providing little to no worker health benefits and pensions, and working against employee friendly workplace regulations.

Simply stated, Mr. Puzder's record on workers' issues is pathetic. Some of the specific examples to support this claim are:

- He has stated that he prefers machines to perform work over workers themselves;

- He is opposed overtime pay;
- He is opposed to the minimum wage, regardless of the amount;
- He is the CEO of a fast food corporation that has refused to pay proper wages for hourly workers;
- His company has also refused to pay overtime to their managers.

During his career as the CEO for CKE Restaurants, Mr. Puzder's fast food establishments have ignored labor laws, and are responsible for wage theft from their employees. For example, Hardees and Carl's Jr, which comprise most of the restaurants under Mr. Puzder's CKE Restaurants corporation, have been found liable for wage and hour theft in 52% of the investigations that have occurred since 2009, and been at fault in 51% of health and safety investigations.ⁱ This alarming record of worker abuse by CKE Restaurant corporation should probably come as no surprise though, as it is consistent with the business model of the fast food industry as a whole, which thrives off of paying low wages, providing little to no health benefits, and of regularly being the subject of safety violations. However, instead of attempting to turn the anti-worker culture of the fast food industry around, Mr. Puzder has spent his career reinforcing this bottom line business culture that prioritizes profits at the expense of employee wages and working conditions.

Lastly, it is worth reminding the committee that if given the choice, Mr. Puzder would not employ people at all. He has made it clear that robots are preferable to human beings, saying that, "Machines are always polite, they always upsell, they never take a vacation, they never show up late, there's never a slip and fall, or an age, sex or race discrimination case." Is there little doubt that, given the opportunity, Mr. Puzder would fire all of his employees and replace them with robots? Is this really the kind of person we want heading the DoL?

In IFPTE's views, Mr. Puzder may be qualified to lead the Department of Anti-Labor, if such a department were to exist, but he is the polar opposite of a person who should lead the DoL as we know it today. IFPTE urges you both, all of the members of your Committee, and the Senate as a whole to reject this nomination.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, I, or IFPTE legislative director, Matt Biggs can be reached at (202) 239-4880.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann,
President - IFPTE

ⁱ <https://tcf.org/content/facts/mapping-andy-puzders-labor-violations/>